



LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM
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LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM

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Cover: *Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, Italian (b. 1461), Holy Family with SS. Elizabeth and John, engraving. County purchase. P. 344.59-1*

TWO PHILADELPHIA SILVERSMITHS

Joseph Richardson, Jr. (1752-1831)
and Richard Humphreys (1750-1832)



FIG. 1. Drum-shaped pot,
c. 1780, by Richard
Humphreys. The Marble
Collection. L. 1023.57-386

THE MOST RECENT addition to the Marble Collection of early American Silver is an elegant little teapot by the Quaker silversmith Joseph Richardson, Jr.¹ It offers interesting contrasts to another and only slightly earlier one² made by his friend Richard Humphreys. Both were highly respected craftsmen in fashionable and flourishing Philadelphia, which by 1776 had a population of 40,000 and was the second city in the whole British Empire.³

But before comparing their work, we should look to the men themselves, whose life-spans almost exactly coincided and whose careers covered nearly the same period.

JOSEPH RICHARDSON, JR. (1752-1831) was of the great Richardson family which supplied four generations of Quaker silversmiths, at work from 1700 until after 1830. Joseph by 1771 was employed in the shop of his distinguished father Joseph Sr. (1711-1784) on Front street between Chestnut and Walnut. On his death the father, after a career of nearly fifty years, left his shop and "working Tools and utensils of trade" to the brothers Joseph Jr. and Nathaniel, who conducted a partnership, 1785-91. Nathaniel then retired to the ironmongery trade and Joseph worked alone, though from 1801-09 he was in a loose partnership "James Howell & Company," dissolved 1810. All these years, he enjoyed a fine patronage (being related to the wealthy and influential Shippens was no handicap) and his day-book for 1796-1811 also records the making of Indian trade silver, a branch of work in which his father had engaged. George Washington in 1795 appointed him Assayer of the Mint, which position he held until his death in 1831, being succeeded by his son John, to whom he bequeathed his "scales and weights & silver smiths Tools and a Silver Cup with General Washington's Arms on."

RICHARD HUMPHREYS (1750-1832) was apprenticed to the prominent Irish-born silversmith Philip Syng, Jr. (1703-1789) "at the Sign of the Coffee-pot, near the Draw-Bridge." A friend of Franklin and active in colonial affairs, Syng is oftenest remembered as the maker (1752) of the historic inkstand used in the signing of the Declaration of Independence. He retired in 1772 and published flattering notices of his successor, the former apprentice Mr. Humphreys, who had launched his own career at Wilmington the year before. Richard Humphreys now married into the select company of Quakers, "his virtuous Consort, Hannah," being a daughter of the well known looking-glass maker John Elliott, and for a quarter century (1771-96) he served discriminating persons—in 1774 he fashioned a great urn inscribed by the First Continental Congress to its secretary Charles Thomson, and in 1780 a set of eight camp cups for General Washington, engraved with his crest.⁴

Made about 1780 for a member of the Ash family and monogrammed JSA,⁵ our finely wrought drum-shaped teapot by Richard Humphreys (Fig. 1) is crisply fin-

ished with beaded moldings and its loose cover fitted with a twisted bell-shape knob. Longer than customary, its straight-thrusting slender spout gives the piece a saucy flavor.

On the underside of this pot, some lightly scratched words intrigue the imagination—the name “Mifs S. Ashe” and a note “G^d Prise \$40,000 | Nelcours.” Was *Nelcours* the name of a racehorse, and was this pretty pot bought from his winnings?

Drum-shaped pots enjoyed a fashion from about 1775-90, replacing the inverted pear-shape pot raised on a molded foot, and followed in turn by teapots either urn-shaped or oval. Paul Revere the Boston patriot made two similar pots (one dated 1783) both with pinecone finials, the first with a high-domed loose cover and the second with hinged lid above a hollowed shoulder.⁶ These drum-shaped examples were apparently a favorite in Maryland, where we find them made by Standish Barry, James Chalmers, Joseph Toy (three known) and Isaiah Wagster.⁷ Still another with pineapple knob was made 1784 in Philadelphia by William Donovan.⁸

As a link between the work of our two Philadelphia men in the Marble Collection, three drum-shaped pots with the J & N R mark of Joseph & Nathaniel Richardson are also found—closely like Richard Humphreys’ fine example, and all with the same beaded-molding trim.⁹

The Joseph Richardson, Jr. teapot (Fig. 2), recently acquired, is in the genteel neo-classic taste employed for the great tea and coffee services made by so many Philadelphia silversmiths from about 1785. Vase-shapes on a square foot were finished with fine-beaded seams, the graceful swan’s-neck spout was now used and high-swept covers were topped with an urn or pineapple. Here the C-curved wooden handle is

FIG. 2
silver teapot
made c. 1790
by Joseph
Richardson, Jr.
The Marble
Collection.
L.1023.47-382



capped with a carved waterleaf, and the monogram MS is engraved in a "bright-cut" oval medallion hung from a bowknot and flanked by crossed palm branches.

A regional characteristic is the charming feature of a pierced gallery, used *ca.* 1790 by Richardson himself on a pair of *oval* teapots with pineapple finials, part of a large service.¹⁰ The pierced gallery and same pineapple finial occur again on a *drum*-shaped pot made *ca.* 1780-85 by William Hollingshead.¹¹ Teapots that altogether match the design of ours by Richardson are found with the marks of such front rank Philadelphia makers as John McMullin or Joseph Lowmes, and in a tea service made 1787 by the great Jewish silversmith Abraham Dubois.¹²

GREGOR NORMAN-WILCOX

NOTES

¹ Height 10," width 11." Marked four times underfoot with the maker's initials JR incuse.

² Diameter 4 1/2," width 10." Maker's customary mark *R Humphreys* in script. Pictured p. 69 in the *Connoisseur Year-Book*, 1956.

³ Carl Bridenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsman* (1950), p. 66.

⁴ The former pictured No. 179 and the latter No. 151 in the exhibition catalogue *Philadelphia Silver*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1956. The dated bill for the cups is given p. 35 in Kathryn C. Buhler, *Mount Vernon Silver* (1957).

⁵ James Ash married Sarah Hinchman in 1771. Pl. 62 and p. 70 in William M. Hornor, Jr., *The Blue-Book of Philadelphia Furniture* (1935).

⁶ Fig. 48 in Millicent Stow, *American Silver* (1950), and opp. p. 56 in Kathryn C. Buhler, *American Silver* (1950), the latter from the Mark Bortman Collection.

⁷ J. Hall Pleasants & Howard Sill, *Maryland Silversmiths, 1715-1830* (1930), Pls. XXV, XLIV, XLV and XLVII.

⁸ No. 30 in *Norfolk Silversmiths* (1951), The Norfolk Museum, Norfolk, Virginia.

⁹ Pictured No. 325 in loan-exhibition catalogue *Colonial Silversmiths, Makers and Apprentices* (1956), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; No. 273 in *Masterpieces of American Silver* (1960), Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; and another made for Philadelphia's popular Revolutionary mayor, Samuel Powel, p. 41 in *The Hundred Masterpieces of American Silver—Part IV, Antiques* for July 1949.

¹⁰ No. 118 in Martha Gandy Fales, *American Silver in the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum* (1958).

¹¹ No. 144 in the Philadelphia Museum catalogue *Philadelphia Silver* (1956).

¹² Millicent Stow, *op. cit.*, Fig. 63.

NEW ACQUISITIONS: Prints by



Andrea Mantegna,
Giovanni Antonio
da Brescia, Hans
Baldung Grien,
Israhel van
Meckenem, &
Georges Rouault

FIG. 1. Israhel van Meckenem,
German, c. 1450-1503.
The Visit to the Spinner,
engraving. County purchase.
P. 323.59-1

ONE OF ANDREA MANTEGNA'S greatest engravings has recently entered the Museum's graphic department. Of the few autographic prints assigned to him, the *Entombment* in horizontal format¹ (Fig. 2) is certainly the grandest and most expressive. It ranks with the powerful group of such subjects uniquely adaptable to the North Italian school with its history of naturalism unparalleled in the art of that country.



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FIG. 2. Andrea Mantegna, Italian, 1431-1506.
The Entombment, engraving.
County purchase. P. 323.59-2



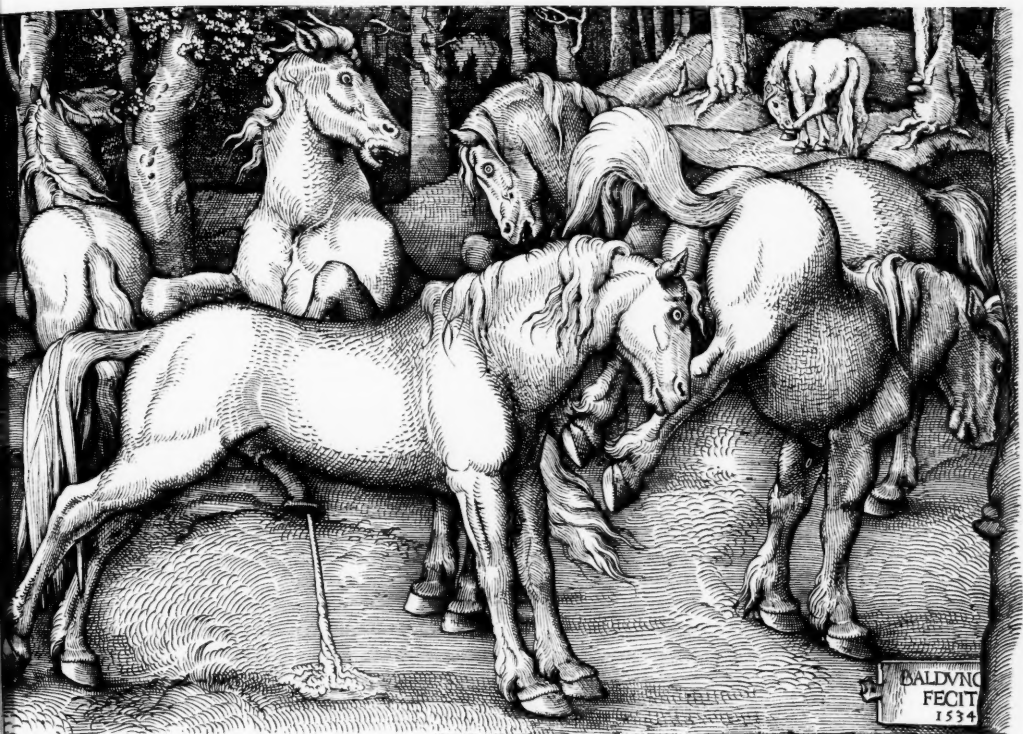
The composition of this heroic engraving was related by Hind to a relatively early period in the artist's career, the time of the S. Zeno altarpiece, and its predella *Calvary*, now in the Louvre, about 1456-59. The actual engraving, however, he suggested as having been done in the late decade of Mantegna's life, following Kristeller's opinion. E. Tietze-Conrat ascribed the print to as late as 1490, with "the idea... perhaps of a few years earlier."² As for the extraordinary emotional content of the work, Kristeller noted a reminiscence of Donatello, and Mantegna's expression of the pathos of ancient tragedy. Mrs. Tietze-Conrat also believed that Mantegna had here transposed the spirit of his *Triumph of Caesar* into a sacred theme.

To understand the intensity of feeling in the plate which is not rivalled in any of the other Mantegna engravings, it is necessary to look to the tradition of the representation of the subject in North Italy. In 1449, Donatello created for the high altar of the church of Sant' Antonio (*Il Santo*), in Padua, a limestone relief of the *Entombment*. The four women at the tomb are so equally agitated in their violent grief that, as has been said, it is impossible to distinguish the Virgin among them. In the center of the relief, one of the shrieking women has flung out her arms in helpless abandonment, and this gesture is exactly repeated in the screaming woman in our engraving. In Donatello's late bronze *Pietà*, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, an equally dramatic, expressive piece, St. John the Evangelist turns away to hide his grief, a corresponding movement which occurs in the figure hiding his tears at the mouth of the cave, in the present work.

Mantegna's profound influence and stimulus by Donatello is well known, and we cannot doubt that in his representation of the sepulture of Christ he would not follow the powerful suggestion of the great sculptor who revolutionized North Italian art by his work in Padua before the middle of the Quattrocento. In 1463, three years before Donatello's death, the little studied sculptor, Niccolo dell' Arca, executed a terracotta group of the *Lamentation*, which is in the church of Santa Maria della Vita, Bologna. Here the four mourning women present an orgy of unrestrained grief in a lifelike representation which has credited the artist as the originator of the so-called *tableaux vivants*. His pupil, Giulio Mazzoni of Modena, followed him with a correspondingly emotional *Entombment* (1485-89), of which only fragments now exist in the Padua Museum. Thus Mantegna's engraving is one in a group of extremely realistic and poignant treatments of the subject, whose source was Donatello and, ultimately, Roman sarcophagi, particularly those with reliefs of the death of Meleager.



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TO BE FURTHER STUDIED in connection with the ideas of Mantegna is another recent acquisition, the engraving of the *Holy Family with SS. Elizabeth and John*³ (Cover) by Giovanni Antonio da Brescia (B. 1461), about whom little is known. Here in contrast to the profound emotionalism of the *Entombment* we find the more accustomed dignity and severity of the austere Paduan master. The design is surely that of Mantegna, related to the period of his altarpiece, the *Virgin and Child with SS. Mary Magdalene and John the Baptist*, in the National Gallery, London, about 1495-1500, and was probably engraved by da Brescia prior to Mantegna's death in 1506. In a fine impression of the second state, when the background was cross-hatched—and which is, actually, almost as rare as the first state—the work is a welcome addition to the Museum's collection of early Italian engravings.

FIG. 3
Hans Baldung
Grien, German,
1494/5-1545.
Stallion &
Rearing Steed
with Wild
Horses, woodcut.
County purchase.
P. 361.60-1

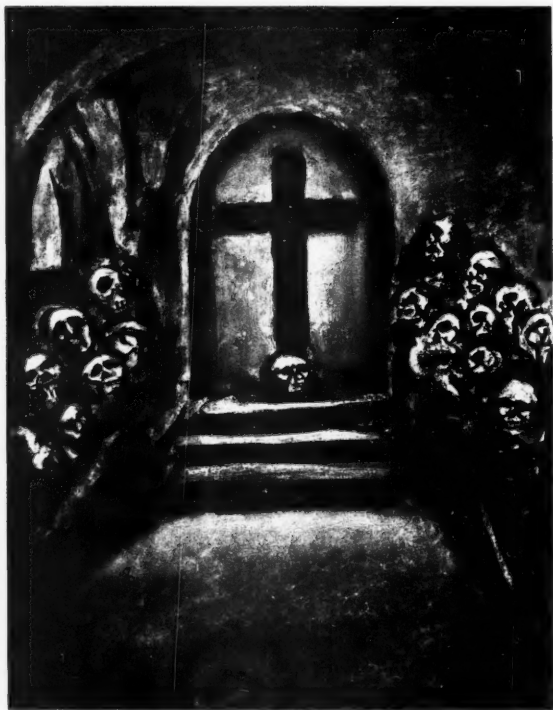
THE FIRST engraving by Israhel van Meckenem (1450-1503) to enter the Museum's collection is the variously entitled interior which we call here, after Fitzroy Carrington, the *Visit to the Spinner*⁴ (Fig. 1). Van Meckenem whose reputation as plagiarist and whose excessive Gothicism have in the past somewhat mitigated against his appreciation, may probably now be prized for some of the very "weaknesses" previously criticized. He was born in Bocholt, diocese of Münster, the family name coming from the city of Meckenheim, in the Rhineland. He was the son of a goldsmith and engraver, long called the "Master of the Berlin Passion," but who actually bore the same given name.

The younger Israhel formed his graphic style under the influence of his father and also of the great Master E. S. (who may have been Erwin von Stege, Master of the Imperial Mint). A great deal of his activity was given over to the copying and re-touching of the latter's plates, he having entered into the master's studio in 1466. With the great laxity in regard to originality, or even quality, at that time, Israhel was able to augment his income by the sale of prints taken from the work of the Master E. S., whose plates he acquired following the latter's death. He likewise copied the engravings of Schongauer, but without strong trace of his style. Despite this rather checkered background and training, Israhel was capable of original en-

gravings of considerable graphic power and technical brilliance.

The *Visit* is from the celebrated set of "Twelve Engravings from Daily Life," and this presents one of the rare pictures of daily existence in the fifteenth century since it is a real life interior rather than a religious one. This set of prints is perhaps the only source for graphic knowledge of fifteenth century daily life that we have. It consists of twelve engravings of couples. The first five in the series are of standing pairs against elaborate banderoles. The sixth varies in depicting an enraged wife beating her husband against a background with an ornamental dragon. The following six plates are of seated pairs, all, in contrast to the preceding group shown in actual interiors. Three

FIG. 4. Georges
Rouault, French,
1871-1958.
Celui qui croit
en moi, fut-il
mort, vivra,
etching & aquatint.
Gift of Harold P.
& Jane F. Ullman.
A.7491.59-1



show couples at music; one, a man & woman on a bed; the eleventh, a visit to the spinner, and the final plate, a couple at cards.

The first half of the series is primarily of ornamental or decorative intent, as the undulating scrollwork indicates. The second half, equally as decorative in all its accessories, has additional scope in its settings, where we can see graphically the interiors and appointments of the time. In our engraving, for example, the cupboard with the array of tankards, beakers and books has received special commendation as a Gothic "still-life." It surely conveys a picture of the household accessories of the fifteenth century, and in its confronted couple prefigures such scenes in seventeenth century Dutch painting. The picturesque head-dress of the gentleman, with its wide band and brave feathers, worn also in the preceding plate of the series, can serve to date the engraving because it appears as a fashion in van Meckenem's famous *Dance at the Court of Herod*, which has been placed about 1480. As in that engraving, long pointed shoes, in this series, appear together with broad-toes. The gentleman visitor in our engraving, on the other hand, wears soft, broad-toe boots, loosely rolled around his legs.



FIG. 5. Georges Rouault, *Homo homini lupus*, etching & aquatint. Gift of Harold P. & Jane F. Ullman. A.7491.59-3

IN 1534, HANS BALDUNG GRIEN, then about fifty, designed three woodcuts on the theme of fighting, wild horses (Curjel 81, 82, 83). Of the three, the one catalogued by Curjel as the first, is the best known, through reproduction, its influence, for example, upon Franz Marc, in the days of the Blue Rider, having done much for its renown. The three woodcuts are similar, each representing a group of six or seven horses in a field, two showing actual struggle, and all marked by the same spirit of fierceness and savagery. The Museum has recently acquired one of the prints, perhaps the least known and reproduced (Fig. 3). The full title is *Stallion and Rearing Stud Among a Group of Wild Horses in a Field* (C. 82).⁵

The three variations of this compelling composition must point up the artist's preoccupation with the subject which was drawn, without doubt, from actuality as wild horses were known to exist in the forests near Strasbourg, the city of Baldung's birth. By their force of treatment and extraordinary subject, selected for itself without religious—or humanist—implications, the woodcuts are strangely modern and powerfully effective. Hans Baldung has risen in new estimation in recent times. Despite his undisputed influence by Dürer he is at the same time a great pole to the latter's Renaissance classicism. Unlike Dürer, Baldung never left Germany, never visited Italy. He embodies less the drive for linear perfection than the expression of the dæmonic, less the struggle, which was Dürer's, for the ideal than the incarnation of the instinctual. Superlative master of the woodcut, his favored medium, he found in it a language of emotional intensity and dynamic expression, such as is writ large in our rare woodcut, of which there are perhaps only three in this country.

FOUR PLATES FROM GEORGES ROUAULT'S *Miserere* were generously given to the graphic department recently by Harold P. and Jane F. Ullman. They include [Plate 24] *Hiver lèpre de la terre*, [Plate 28] *Celui qui croit en moi, fut-il mort, viva* (Fig. 4), [Plate 37] *Homo homini lupus* (Fig. 5), and [Plate 45] *La mort l'a pris comme il sortait du lit d'orties*. The great series of *Miserere* plates, commissioned by Vollard and made to illustrate the text of André Suarès, were first published in 1948, although printed as early as 1927, and conceived by the artist in 1914. They remain the most powerful and effective suite by the artist, and their familiarity by ubiquitous reproduction can do nothing to reduce the impact of their original graphic and spiritual communication.

As is well known, the *Miserere* plates combine a multiplicity of methods, etching, aquatint, drypoint, roulette which the artist used to work over the heliogravure on the copper plate. Rouault himself said of his technique, "Never satisfied, I resumed each subject endlessly, sometimes in as many as twelve to fifteen successive states..." As a result of this tireless painstaking, and through the junction of original etching with the photomechanical reproduction of painting there emerged a matchless technique, as painterly as it is graphic, and perhaps the most significantly creative print contribution of our time.

EBRIA FEINBLATT

NOTES.

¹ Ex-collection Duc d'Arenberg.

² Mrs. Tietze-Conrat advanced the possibility that Mantegna was not engraver himself, and used as an argument the late date of the *Entombment*, when the artist was fifty-nine, overburdened with work, and, on the face of it, too aged and hard-pressed for the extremely fine graver work

of this print. See *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Dec. 1943, pp. 375-81; and Mantegna, 1955, p. 242.

³ Ex-collection Friedrich Augustus II; Philip Hofer.

⁴ Ex-collection Gottfried Eissler.

⁵ Watermark: Three fleur-de-lis (Briquet 1815). Ex-collection Dr. Egon Kormann; Dr. Henry Schaefer-Simmern.

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